

HOUSE No. 1137

By Ms. Blumer of Framingham (by request), petition of Robert Edwards to prohibit the use of headers in soccer games sponsored by public and private schools and colleges. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF HEADERS IN SOCCER GAMES SPONSORED BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. For purposes of this Act, the following words
2 shall have the following meanings, unless a different meaning is
3 required by the context or is specifically prescribed:—

4 (a) “Soccer Match,” any school sanctioned competition orga-
5 nized for recreational purposes.

6 (b) “Header,” any use of the head during a soccer match to
7 field, pass, aim or otherwise actively and affirmatively direct the
8 movement of the soccer ball.

9 (c) “Player,” any student in the Commonwealth of Massachu-
10 setts engaging in the sport of soccer. Players include, but are not
11 limited to students enrolled in any elementary, secondary, post
12 secondary, college, public or private educational institution in the
13 Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the
2 contrary, no player participating in a soccer match in any public or
3 private school including elementary, middle and high school, or
4 any public or private college in the Commonwealth, shall use a
5 header during a soccer game. All players shall wear helmets
6 designed to protect against head injuries.

1 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or
2 special law to the contrary, there is hereby established a Sports

3 Injury Commission to investigate and report on the incidence of
4 sports injuries in elementary, middle and high school children.
5 Said commission shall collect data of the types of sports injuries,
6 frequency, severity, identify high-risk sports, and long term
7 impact of sports injuries on young athletes, including but not lim-
8 ited to the rate and type of eye, facial and head injuries incurred
9 and the types of sports most frequently associated with such
10 injuries. The commission shall develop strategic and legislative
11 recommendations to reduce the incidence of sports injuries
12 including the mandatory use of protective eye wear and/or head-
13 gear in all high-risk sports.

14 The commission shall be comprised of the House and Senate
15 Chairs of the Joint Committee on Health Care, who shall serve as
16 co-chairs of the commission; the House and Senate Chairs of the
17 Joint Committee on Education; the Commissioner of the Depart-
18 ment of Public Health or his designee; the Commissioner of the
19 Department of Education; and one representative from each of the
20 following organizations: the Massachusetts Society of Eye Physi-
21 cians and Surgeons; the Massachusetts Medical Society; the
22 Massachusetts College of Emergency Room Physicians; the
23 Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;
24 the Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians; the Massachu-
25 setts Interscholastic Athletic Association; the Massachusetts
26 School Nurses Association; the Massachusetts Dental Society, the
27 Massachusetts Coaches Association, the Massachusetts Head
28 Injury Association and two high school students.